

VZCZCXRO3974
RR RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHGI RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEH KI #1183 2820600
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 090600Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6992
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 0212
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 1469
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUEBBA/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHDC
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE

UNCLAS KINSHASA 001183

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR AF/EPS - CTRIMBLE, EB/TRA/OTP - BMATTINGLY
NTSB FOR DJONES
DAKAR FOR FAA - MKEANE
ROME FOR TSA - JHALINSKI
DOT FOR SMCDERMOTT, PASS FAA - CHUNTER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAIR](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [CASC](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: PLANE CRASH KILLS OVER THIRTY IN KINSHASA; TRANSPORT
MINISTER FIRED

REF: 06 KINSHASA 922

¶1. (U) An Antonov 26-100B airplane crashed immediately after taking off from Kinshasa's N'djili International Airport at 9:43am on October 4. According to the Congolese Air Authority, Regie des Voies Aeriennes (RVA) all but one of the 11 adults, 2 children, and 5 crew members on board were killed. The total death toll is estimated to be at least thirty-seven, including victims on the ground, while at least four homes were damaged or destroyed. No Amcits, either aboard the plane or on the ground, were killed in the accident.

¶2. (U) Hypolitte Mwaka, Acting Director of the Congolese Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), said the plane was owned by Elsam Airlines, though there are conflicting reports stating that a company called Africa One is the owner. Operated by Malila Airlift, the plane was flying to Tshikapa, the alluvial diamond mining capital of southern Kasai-Occidental province, near the Angolan border. According to Mwaka, the CAA has established an investigation commission to look for the black box and to determine the cause of the crash.

¶3. (U) DRC Transport Minister, Remy Henri Kuseyo Gatanga, who had been trying to impose a ban on the Soviet-era Antonovs since the last one crashed on September 7 in Goma, was fired on October 5. He said that, despite his efforts, it had been impossible to enforce the ban at the local level. Media reports have hinted that Parliament and the Federation des Entreprises Congolaises (FEC) were opposed to the ban.

¶4. (U) Comment. More planes have crashed in the DRC since 1945 than in any other country in Africa, and the latest crash again underscores the continued danger of flying here (reftel). This is the third Antonov, dubbed "flying coffins" by the Congolese media, to crash in as many months, and the tenth in the last three years. This is the first time in the last decade, however, that a crash killed large numbers of people on the ground. This latest air accident, like the train accident of early August that killed over one hundred people, will perhaps finally be the impetus for some much-needed reforms. End comment.

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